

# **COMPETING IDENTITIES THE CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

Valentin Florin Ion

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Approved by:

Robert M. Jenkins

Graeme Robertson

Peter Sherwood

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## **Abstract**

VALENTIN FLORIN ION: Competing Identities  
The Construction of National Identity in the Borderland Moldova  
(Under the direction of Robert M. Jenkins)

This paper discusses the competing processes for national identity construction in the Republic of Moldova between a Moldovan national identity and a Romanian national identity. The paper follows three main theories of national identity construction coined by Keith Darden, David Laitin and Rogers Brubaker and surveys the implementation of mass schooling in interwar Romania, the shift in national identity of Moldova during the Soviet Union and the process of national identity building in independent Moldova. I argue that the group who controls institutions also controls the future identity of the country. The education system is the main creator of national identity and after the collapse of the Soviet Union the Moldovan education system was controlled by the pro-Romanian identity groups. I conclude that the number of Moldovans who self-identify with Romanian language has increased significantly in the last two decades.

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Sergiu Tomşa, *Literatură și Artă*, January 1, 1989\_\_\_\_\_vii





## 1. Introduction

“Lord! Paralyze the hand that wrote these Journals! Only, have mercy, forgive me, maybe this hand will redeem something.”<sup>1</sup> So Andrei Lupan confessed in 1992 during his last public appearance referring to his own personal journals from the 1950s and 1960s. He was born in 1912, in Orhei, at that time part of the Tsarist province of Bessarabia in a family of Moldovan peasants. Lupan was schooled under the Romanian education system and published his first poem in 1932. Although he was taught that he was Romanian and spoke Romanian, he enrolled in the Romanian Communist Party, choosing to adopt an internationalist and class self-identification and not a national one. Even more, during the Second World War he worked for Radio Moscow’s Romanian language department and supported the Soviet war efforts against Romania. After the war, Lupan returned to Chisinau, the capital of the Socialist Soviet Republic of Moldova, where he became the President of the Writers’ Union. He was still a self-identified communist, but the Soviet Union’s internal structure named him a Moldovan who spoke Moldovan language. Lupan continued to speak Moldovan until 1989 when he, as one of the deputies of the Moldovan Supreme Soviet, asked for Moldovan with Latin script and, in 1992, during his 80th anniversary he openly named his people and their language “Romanian.”

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<sup>1</sup> In original “Usucă, Doamne, mâna care le-a scris! Numai, mai îndură-te, mai iartă-mă, poate cu această mână voi mai putea îndrepta ceva.” <http://www.andreilupan.com/loaditem.do?id=399500010>  
03.12.2013

Who was Andrei Lupan and what was his first language?<sup>2</sup> Was he Moldovan, Romanian, Soviet, Communist? Did he speak Romanian or Moldovan? Maybe, was he all at the same time? During his lifetime Lupan experienced several national ideas. In interwar Romania he was first Romanian, speaking Romanian and then he became communist, identifying himself in terms of class and not nationality. After the war he became Soviet but he kept speaking the same language even though he named it Moldovan. In 1990s, he renamed his first language Romanian and considered himself as being part of the Romanian people. Not every Moldovan shifted from a Romanian identity to a Communist, a Soviet, a Moldovan and then back to a Romanian identity. But Moldova<sup>3</sup> went through at least three processes of national identity construction.

In this paper I discuss the processes of national identity construction in Moldova. I study the territory of today's Moldova, situated between the rivers Prut and Dniester. Still, the paper addresses the case of interwar Transnistria but only to offer a comprehensive image of Moldova. I am interested in how national identity was constructed in the last century but especially since late 1980s. I argue that the group which controls the institutions that create national identity also controls the future identity of the country. I consider the education system the main institution that creates national identity. I argue that a small pro-Romanian identity group emerged during the Soviet Union. In the early 1990s, the same group managed to control the

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<sup>2</sup> I use the term "first language" to describe what conventionally it is called "native language" or "mother tongue." I do not use the term "mother tongue" because I am interested in the standardized language used by the centralized system of education and not in the variants of language taught orally in each family. Therefore, I think "native language" is a more appropriate term.

<sup>3</sup> In this paper I use the term Moldova to describe the territory that is controlled by the political elites from Chisinau and avoid the term Bessarabia used by Charles King. Therefore, I am referring neither to the historical Moldova, which Western half is nowadays part of Romania, nor to the breakaway territory of Transnistria. For the facility of the text I will use the term Moldova also when I am referring to the Soviet Moldavia and Transnistria to refer to both Autonomous Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic.

political institutions and the education system. The consequences of their policies resulted in the creation of new generations of Moldovans with a Romanian identity.

After the pro-Romanian identity political parties lost the 1994 parliamentary elections, any change of the curriculum in the education system was blocked through street protests. The name of the language and the popularity of the political parties are the two indicators of national identity on which I will focus. It can be noticed that after two decades of independence it can be noticed an increased in the percentage of Moldovans who name their language Romanian and a significant increase in the votes received by the pro-Romanian identity political parties.

I argue that mass schooling was implemented during interwar Romania when the name of the official language, Romanian, was institutionally unchallenged. During the same period of time a different national identity was created in Transnistria, then a part of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic under the name of Autonomous Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. In Transnistria was institutionalized for the first time the glottonym Moldovan language and Moldovan national identity. After the WWII the glottonym Moldovan was extended to most of the territory the Soviet Union incorporated from Romania.

Starting with 1944 Moldova experienced a shift from a Romanian national identity to a Soviet identity based on class. Even though the main indicator of the Soviet identity was class origin, language and national identity existed as secondary indicators of the Soviet identity. The main language of the Soviet identity was Russian and, as a consequence, there were implemented policies of Russification. For Moldovans, Soviet identity meant also a shift in the form and name of their language. The script was changed from Latin to Cyrillic and the name of the language renamed

from Romanian to Moldovan and promoted as similar but distinct languages. Russian language and the terms Moldovan language and Moldovan nationality were institutionalized in administration and the education system at the same time and remained closely connected to the Soviet identity.

As I show in this paper, from late 1940s the Soviet power did not trust the Moldovans born on the right side of Dniester and the political power and the economic resources were controlled by the Moldovans from the left side of Dniester (Transnistria) or by Russians.<sup>4</sup> The main institutions controlled by the Moldovans from the right side of Dniester were the Writers' Union and the Polytechnic Institute. Members of these institutions would continuously show opposition to political power and challenge the Soviet identity.

Finally, I discuss the competition between the main political parties in post-Soviet Moldova and the role played by national identity in their leaders' rhetoric. I argue that it is not an ethnic distinction between the Moldovan and the Romanian identities but it is more a political competition for the glottonyms and ethnonyms "Moldovan" – "Romanian." In the late 1980s, Gorbachev created the institutional framework which allowed competition for the Soviet Union's political establishment and the intellectual elites offered an alternative to the Communist Party, which was the representative of the central power in Moldova. Organized under the umbrella of the Popular Front, the intellectuals questioned the legitimacy of the Soviet identity and proposed in exchange a Romanian national identity. Initially, the Popular Front gained political control of the country and, therefore, control over the education system. The members

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<sup>4</sup> I use the term Russians to refer to the Soviet citizens who settled in the territory of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldavia after the Second World War. This term should not be confused with ethnic Russians who lived in Moldova even before the war. Alain Dieckhoff uses the term "imperial minorities" (Dieckhoff 2000: 212).

of the Popular Front introduced in Moldovan schools the courses “Romanian language and literature” and “History of Romanians,” allowed local Moldovans to control the schools and cultural institutions, and tightened cultural relations with Romania. As a consequence, the Popular Front managed to lay foundations to generate Romanian identity instead of Moldovan. The Popular Front lost political control over the education system in 1994 after the first post-Soviet elections but the supporters of the Popular Front and especially high school and college students continued to challenge major changes to the education system through street protest.

At the end of the paper I show that even though the majority of Moldovans name their language Moldovan the percentage is smaller in the case of the young generations educated after the collapse of the Soviet Union and especially among Moldovans with high levels of education. The percentage of the Moldovans who name their native language Romanian in the case of these two social groups is higher than the national average. I interpret these numbers as a result of the Popular Front’s reforms in the field of education.

In conclusion, I argue that national identity is a continuous process based on political preferences and generated mostly by the education system. In the case of Moldova the Romanian national identity created in the interwar period shifted to a Soviet class identity with a regional institutionalized Moldovan identity. Political opportunities created at the end of the Soviet era allowed the opposition groups to legitimize themselves and to challenge the central government using Romanian identity. The self-identified Romanian part of the Moldovan society managed to institutionalize Romanian identity in the education system and, as a source of their political power, to condemn any interference. A result of their policies has been an

increase percentage of the Moldovans who have a self-identified Romanian national identity.

## **2. Terms and definitions**

### **2.1 Identity**

The national-state is the latest political entity political communities have created. A national-state is a modern construction. It is first imagined by intellectuals and then assumed and adapted by political elites and imposed over a controlled territory for a stronger cohesion and a deeper loyalty to the political center. Intellectuals are the initiators of the national idea and they imagine the nation based on a preexisting identity of an ethnic group.

Just like a national-state, individuals' identities are also a construction based on "race, gender, class, job, religious affiliation, national origin" (Tilly 1996: 7). Charles Tilly defines identity as "an actor's experience of a category, tie, role, network, group or organization, coupled with a public representation of that experience; the public representation often takes the form of a shared story, a narrative" (Tilly 1996: 7).

In this paper, the term identity should be "understood as a specifically collective phenomenon" and "as a ground or basis of social or political action" (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 7). In *Identity in Formation*, David Laitin talks about "personal identities" as opposed to "constructed social identities." He sees personal identities as inalienable identities and "a person who is  $x$  today will surely be  $x$  tomorrow" (Laitin 1998: 14). Therefore, in the following paragraphs, identity does not have a broad meaning but a narrower one. I am not referring to any kind of collective social movement, which can be any movement that impacts an important number of

people, who share one or more common characteristics or interests, but more to those social movements that are connected to nationalism or ethnicity as explained below.

## **2.2 Ethnicity and Nationality**

In spite of the fact that the terms *ethnicity* and *nationality* are used interchangeably outside the academic world, many scholars differentiate them. Anthony D. Smith considers ethnicity as “a precursor and foundation of the nation” (Sutherland 2012: 28). Others, such as Craig Calhoun, think that “while it is impossible to dissociate nationalism entirely from ethnicity, it is equally impossible to explain it simply as a continuation of ethnicity or a simple reflection of common history or language” (Calhoun 1993: 211). He adds that nationalism “remains the pre-eminent rhetoric for attempts to demarcate political communities, claim rights of self-determination and legitimate rule by reference to *the people* of a country” (Calhoun 1993: 211). He also thinks that “ethnic solidarities and identities are claimed most often where groups do not seek *national* autonomy but rather a recognition internal to or cross-cutting national or state boundaries” (Calhoun 1993: 211).

I think that ethnicity and nationality share the same characteristics. Both terms define a group of people, who most of the time have the same or similar language, religion, historical background, myths and symbols. But while ethnicity is based on what Herder described as folklore, nationality is the politically institutionalized form of ethnicity. Nationality is uniformly spread throughout the entire territory controlled by political institutions. The language is standardized, myths and symbols are rethought and the role of *volk* (the people) in creating new characteristics of the community is replaced by the government.

I look at national identity as a constructed phenomenon with some elements that survive throughout time but an identity that changes based on political opportunities. Keith A. Darden believes that national identity is a durable construction (Darden 2013). Darden argues that *nation* is a modern concept and that nation-states initially used the centralized education system to build the nation and then to perpetuate its loyalty to the central government. He adds that after being literate, a community will keep its loyalty for generations despite change of the political authority. A similar approach is held by Mark Beissinger, who considers that individuals build strong identities and only what seems durable national attachment changes (Beissinger 2002). Other scholars such as Rogers Brubaker and David Laitin think that national identity is changing when social opportunities change (Brubaker 1996; Laitin 1998). They argue that individuals do not have a deep national identity and one's identity can be easily constructed and experiences alteration.

### **2.3 The state**

Any modern state utilizes principles which legitimize its existence. Many modern European countries use the right of national self-determination in order to build the identity of their main ethnic group. Other nations such as the United States legitimize their existence based on civic rights. Another type of legitimization has been used by communist countries that considered themselves representatives of the working class.

Initially, the term *nation* represented “a group of men belonging together by similarity of birth” (Kedourie 1961: 13), which in modern terms means a social group that reaches its social status mainly by birth and not through education, welfare, work



or personal skills. In the early modern age, the children of barons, prelates, and nobles were expected to become barons, prelates, and nobles with little possibilities to change their social group. From the French Revolution, E. J. Sieyes defines *a nation* as “a body of associates living under one common law and represented by the same legislature” (Kedourie 1961: 15). He and most of the French revolutionaries did not see nation in terms of language and culture but more on principles of citizenship. One of the French revolutionaries’ demands was equality among all *nationalities*, which did not imply equal rights following ethnic criteria but civic ones.

According to Lipset, the United States was the first country promoting civil and political general rights for its citizens.<sup>5</sup> America “was not only a new nation, it was a new society, much less bound to the customs and values of the past than any nation of Europe” (Lipset 1963: 94). Because the new Americans did not have strong roots on American soil and because of the lack of common religion, culture and myths, they legitimized their political entity by different principles. The USA could not build national unity based on ethnicity and instead relied mainly on civic rights. Lipset argues that American “national identity was formed under the aegis, first of a charismatic authority figure, and later under the leadership of a dominant “left wing” or revolutionary party led successively by three Founding Fathers” (Lipset 1963: 90).

The national idea was later developed by the German Enlightenment philosophy. The state was not expected to serve only a few social groups but all those who shared the same language, traditions, and myths. The German type of nationalism prevailed in Europe and *a nation* went from defining a social group to

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<sup>5</sup> Lipset considers the US having “a relatively integrated social structure” apart from “the race issue” (Lipset 1963: 15).

representing an ethnic group. Eric Hobsbawn pointed out that “nations do not make states and nationalism but the other way around” (Hobsbawn 1990: 10). National ideology was adopted by intellectuals to make political demands and by political elites to create national unity.

Scholars like Kohn divided Europe between a civic West and an ethnic East (Kohn 1955) or between a nationalizing East and a civic West as Brubaker argued later (Brubaker 1996). Tilly underlines that “almost all European governments eventually took steps which homogenized their populations” (Tilly 1975: 43). Kuzio argues that “all civic states are composed of both civic and ethnic factors and the proportional relationship between them depends upon how much progress there has been in democratization” (Kuzio 2001: 135). Following Tilly and Kuzio’s ideas, I also think that both East and West are applying civic policies by offering individual or collective rights to ethnic minorities, and, at the same time, have nationalizing tendencies by promoting characteristics, like language and religious holidays, of the dominant ethnic identity at a national level.

Another modern type of state building was influenced by Marxist theories. Countries, which embraced communist ideology, promoted a state based on class rights. In theory, communist ideology considers national states as the last stage of human development before communism. Initially a communist state was supposed to appeal to workers’ class consciousness regardless of their ethnic identity. Taking into consideration that Soviet Union was overwhelmingly a rural country, peasants were the second category represented by the state. The first article of the 1936 USSR constitution mentions that “the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a socialist state

of workers and peasants.” Therefore, intellectuals and other social groups who were considered an “enemy of the people” did not officially constitute the Soviet state. Later, the 1977 Soviet constitution declared that the Soviet Union was “the expression of the will and interests of the workers, peasants, and intelligentsia” the later accepted to represent a third social group. The Soviet Union tied its legitimacy to representing workers, peasants and intelligentsia. Even though the origins of the Soviet state were not connected to the ethnic groups of the union, the national question played an important role for the entire existence of the state.

Expanding on Tilly and Kuzo’s theories, one can observe that Soviet Union was not only a class-state but also a nationalizing-state. Officially, in its 15 republics the Union promoted the cultural traits of the titular ethnic group but unofficially the republics were exposed to a continuous process of Russification. Andropov mentioned in January 1983, “the party’s goal was in Lenin’s words, not only the drawing together of nations but their merger” (Solchanyk 1985: 315). The merging process was obvious from both cultural and politico-administrative perspectives. Russian was the inter-ethnic communication language as well as the language used in bureaucratic activities. Plus, ethnic Russians were over-represented in state and party structures in most of the republics. Therefore, the Soviet Union was a state based on class representation and, at the same time, it was a Russian nationalizing-state.

## 2.4 Ethnic identity in the Republic of Moldova

This section addresses the question of ethnic identity in Moldova. What makes someone Moldovan or Romanian<sup>6</sup> or what if anything is the difference between a Moldovan speaker and a Romanian speaker is the question that I will try to answer in this chapter. I argue that the national identity indicators such as the historical background, cultural traditions, myths and symbols, religion and language of both groups living in Moldova are identical.

In the paper *Ethnic Identification in a Complex Civilization: Who are the Lue?*, Michael Moerman tried to identify the criteria by which the Lue (the Northern Thai whose capital was Chiengrung) portray themselves as a distinct group in the region. He argues that “language, culture, political organization, etc., do not correlate completely, the units delimited by one criterion do not coincide with the units delimited by another” (Moerman 1965: 1215) and, therefore, “someone is a Lue by virtue of believing and calling himself Lue and of acting in ways that validate his Lueness” (Moerman 1965: 1222). I have encountered the same problem trying to distinguish between those of Moldova’s citizens who identify themselves as being Moldovans and those as being Romanians. I argue that objectively Moldovans and Romanians have the same historical background, cultural traditions, myths and symbols, religion and language. Following Moerman I think that someone is Moldovan or Romanian only by virtue of believing and calling himself Moldovan/Romanian and of acting in ways that validates his Moldovanness/Romanianness.

Both groups share the same historical background and identical cultural

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<sup>6</sup> In this paper the word Romanian refers to the language or the ethnic group from Moldova if not mentioned otherwise.

traditions in Moldova. Moldovans or Romanians do not inhabit their present-day areas as a result of group migration since they are not homogeneous geographically compact groups<sup>7</sup> nor as a consequence of individual migration. Moldova does not have regions ethnically compact with Romanians or Moldovans. Also, in the last two centuries the territory on which I am focusing has never been divided between two or more political centers. From North to South and West to East people celebrate the same holidays, eat the same type of food and have the same rituals. At the same time geography of the country and country's natural resources are spread uniformly across the country and, therefore, the country's regions are not characterized by different economies. Even nowadays, except for Chisinau, there is no difference between the level of industrialization in the country. Thus, historical background and cultural traditions do not play any significant role in the ethnic self-identification of the Moldovans and Romanians of Moldova.

Another indicator of the similarities between Moldovan and Romanian identities to be discussed here is related to their national myths and symbols to which both communities show strong attachment. Stephen the Great (Ștefan cel Mare, 1457 – 1504), the most emblematic historical figure in Moldova, is accepted by both communities in Moldova. Moldova's national flag is a vertical tricolor of blue, yellow and red and with a coat of arms on the yellow bar.<sup>8</sup> The same colors and format are used by the Romanian flag excluding the coat of arms. Even though the Romanian flag does not have the same, the Moldovan coat of arms is also part of the official

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<sup>7</sup> Based on political preference one can observe that the pro-Romanian identity parties gain most of their support from the center of the country while pro Moldovan identity parties find their support predominantly from the North and the South of the country.

<sup>8</sup> Law no. 217 adopted on September 17th, 2010 regarding *Drapelul de Stat al Republicii Moldova*.

iconography of Romania alongside the coat of arms of other historical provinces of Romania. A last shared symbol by Moldova and Romania is the word *leu* (lion) which is used to name the currency.

The national anthem is another symbol that is shared by Moldova and Romania. When Moldova proclaimed its independence from the Soviet Union the first national anthem adopted was “Wake up, Romanian!” (Deșteapte-te, române!) which was replaced in 1994 with „Our Language” (Limba noastră). Both songs have roots in the collective memory of Romanians and Moldovans. The song “Wake up, Romanian!” was used for the first time as a national anthem by the Democratic Republic of Moldova between December 1917 and March 1918 and has been Romania’s official anthem since 1990. “Our language” was written by Alexei Mateevici, an early twentieth century Moldovan poet from the Tsarist province of Bessarabia. He was a promoter of Romanian identity in Bessarabia in the early twentieth century. Thus, the national anthem is also a symbol accepted by both identities, Moldovan and Romanian.

Religion is a criterion that often divides societies. In Moldova, Moldovans and Romanians are overwhelmingly Christian Eastern Orthodox.<sup>9</sup> In principle Moldovan and Romanian groups are represented by their own religious institution. The Orthodox community is divided between the Metropolitanate of Chisinau and all Moldova, which is subordinate to the Russian Patriarchate, and the Metropolitanate of Bessarabia, which is subordinate to the Romanian Patriarchate. In practice, people do not follow these criteria mostly due to the lack of differentiation between the two

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<sup>9</sup> According to the 2004 census 93.3 percent of the population of Moldova is Christian Orthodox. <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=ro&idc=295&id=2234> 11.22.2012

denominations. In Moldova, both churches celebrate religious ceremonies and rituals at the same times and in the same ways, and church and religious symbols look identical.

Still, there is a difference between Romanian Orthodox Church (RoC) and Russian Orthodox Church (RuC). RoC celebrates Christmas following the New Style (December 25th), while RuC follows the Old Style (January 7th). But the Metropolitanate of Bessarabia was reactivated by the RoC as an Old Style Church which allows the Metropolitanate of Bessarabia to celebrate Christmas and other religious holidays following the old style. Therefore, there is no difference in religious practices between the Metropolitanate of Chisinau and all Moldova and the Metropolitanate of Bessarabia. Similarities between the two institutions are so close that a church can switch from a religious authority to another without changing anything in its religious practices.<sup>10</sup> Hence, religion plays a very small role in ethnic self-identification.

The most important differentiation between Moldovans and Romanians is made by the word they choose to name their native language. From a linguistic point of view there is no difference between Moldovan language and Romanian language (Gutu 2011). Charles King argues that the difference between Moldovan language and Romanian language consists on the alphabet in which the language is written. If the Latin alphabet is used then the language is Romanian but if the Cyrillic alphabet is used then the language is Moldovan (King 2000: XIX). King gives another example

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<sup>10</sup> In early 2005 an important group of priests left Metropolis of Chisinau and all Moldova (MCM) and joined Metropolis of Bessarabia (MB) as a disapproval of the MCM decision to name Priest Petru Bishop of the newly established Bishoprics of Ungheni and Nisporeni. Eventually they returned back to MCM. For more details visit [http://www.bbc.co.uk/romanian/news/story/2007/03/070329\\_episcop\\_istoric.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/romanian/news/story/2007/03/070329_episcop_istoric.shtml) and <http://episcopia-ungheni.md/index.php/main/article/28/ro>

about how Moldovan differs from Romanian. He argues that Moldovans use the letter “î” to write the vowel sound of [ə] while the Romanians use “â.” For example, Moldovans write the word dog “cîine” while Romanians write it “câine.” But the letter “î” is widely used also in Romania. During Communist Romania only the letter “î” was used in all situations with an exception: the words Romania and Romanian language were written with the letter “â.” In 1993, Romanian Academy considered the letter “î” as being too Slavic and, therefore, Communist and replaced it with “â.” This change could not be done in the Republic of Moldova because the pro-Romanian majority of the parliament was replaced after the February 1994 elections. In Romania, people who graduated before or immediately after 1993 still write using “î” instead of “â” and even the new generations who went to school after 1993 consistently use both letters. The changes made in 1993 affected only the cases when “î” is inside the word and not when it is the first or the last letter of the word or the proper nouns. Thus, “cîine” was replaced with “câine” but other words as “înger”, “împărat”, “a coborî”, etc., are still correctly written using the letter “î” and not “â”. In 2010 the Philology Institute of the Moldovan Academy of Science accepted the same type of linguistic reform as the Romanian Academy did in 1993 (Podoleanu 2012). In order to become compulsory this reform has to be approved by the Moldovan Government. Up to this moment, the Government did not express its opinion on this issue.

In Constantin Tănase’s view, Romanian is the written language while Moldovan is the language spoken by illiterate or semi-illiterate people (Tănase 2012). Even though both theories make a very good point there is little evidence of two distinct languages. A language called Moldovan and distinct from Romanian was for the first time institutionalized in 1924 and existed for five years between 1927 and



1932 in the Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic of Moldova (RASSM) which at that time was part of Soviet Ukraine. The language was created by the Moldovenization and Ukrainization Commission beginning in 1925 and was part of an extended Soviet policy of indigenization of Soviet peoples. The purpose of the Commission was to create a language distinct from Romanian but based on the dialect of the peasants from central Moldova (King 2000: 64-70). Linguists such as Leonid Madan tried to create the language using words that resonate more with the Slavic languages, combining two or more existing words to create new meanings or just borrowing from Russian and Ukrainian. In 1927, 12 study groups existed on the territory of the RASSM trying to teach the Moldovan peasants the newly standardized language (Gribincea, Gribincea and Siscanu 2004: 7). That language is not the same as what is today called the Moldovan language.

<b>Table 1: Examples of Moldovan neologisms in 1929</b>			
English	Standard Romanian	Russian	Moldovan
self-determination	autoadministrare	samoupravlenie	sîngurcîrmui
contemporary	contemporan	sovremennyi	amuvremnic
necktie	cravată	galstuk	galstuh
chronicle	cronică	letopis'	anoscriiri
dictionary	dicţionar	slovar'	slovari
English	englezesc	angliiskii	anglicesc
February	februarie	fevral'	făurari
January	ianuarie	ianvar'	jerariul
monotonous	monoton	odnoobraznyi	unofelnic
custom	obicei	obikhod	zîlnictreburi
like-mindedness	unitate de idei	edinomyslie	unogîndiri
Source: King 2000: 69			

In 1932, the process of Moldovanization was stopped and reversed towards a process of Romanization. The Latin alphabet and literary Romanian was introduced,

which made Moldovan “wholly Romanian” (King 2000: 84). The Latinization lasted until 1938 when all the cultural elites were purged and a young linguist Ivan Dmitrievici Ciobanu “served as the chief exponent of the return to the Cyrillic alphabet” (King 2000: 85). After the Second World War, the main difference between Romanian literary language and Moldovan literary language was the script and after the 1989 Language Law, which reintroduced the Latin script, Moldovan became de facto Romanian. Because there is no written difference between the two languages, quite often the expressions “our language” (limba noastră) or “state language” (limba de stat) are used to refer to the language spoken by Moldovans to please both sides. The definition of Moldovan identity/language changed throughout time but always implied distinctiveness of Romanian identity/language. Table 2 shows the main time periods when Moldovan language was recreated.

Table 2: Changes in the definition of Moldovan language				
Time period	Place	Script	Vocabulary	Comments
1927-1932	Transnistria	Cyrillic	Dialect of the peasants from central Bessarabia	Not a functional language
1932-1938	Transnistria	Latin	Literary Romanian with regional particularities	Functional only among intellectuals
1938-1941	Transnistria/ Moldova	Cyrillic	Literary Romanian with regional and Russian words	The time was too short to become standardized
1941-1944	-----	-----	-----	Moldovan did not exist
1944-1989	Moldova	Cyrillic	Literary Romanian	Differences in the transliteration of some sounds
1989 →	Moldova	Latin	Literary Romanian	Identical with Romanian
Source: Author				

Romanians in Moldova do not reject Moldovan identity but they consider it regional, while Moldovans reject Romanian identity and consider the Moldovan identity as a national identity and Moldovan as a distinct ethnicity. What makes someone Moldovan or Romanian or what if anything is the difference between a

Moldovan speaker and a Romanian speaker is a matter of self-identification. At a rhetorical level there is a Moldovan identity distinct from a Romanian one. Therefore, someone is a Moldovan or Romanian by virtue of believing and calling himself Moldovan or Romanian.

In this chapter I have tried to discuss the main indicators of Moldovan national identity. I argued that the institutionalized indicators of identity such as the historical background, myths, symbols, religion and language are the same between Moldovan and Romanian groups. Throughout the paper I argue that Moldovan and Romanian are not a matter of objectiveness but a subjective self-identification. Someone can have a Moldovan regional identity and a Romanian national identity. From a generational approach, in a family the parents might think they speak Moldovan while their children can call it Romanian. There is no major distinctiveness between Romanian and Moldovan which allows me to approach the following chapters looking at the competition between cultural and political elites and the institutions they control. The process of national identity building in Moldova is a result of this competition.

### **3. Theories of identity formation. Applications to Moldova**

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, in Moldova a Moldovan/Romanian ethnic identity can be found but a contested national identity divided between the Moldovan and Romanian identities. In this chapter I argue that the first generation of Moldovans that experienced mass schooling was in interwar Romania. I think that the identity of the region shifted after the WWII from Romanian to Moldovan identity but parts of the generation educated in the interwar period kept a Romanian consciousness. Finally, I consider the state's institutions the main creator of national identity.

I see the centralized education system as the main creator of national identity and I think that someone's chances to build deep national loyalties increases based on the number of received years of schooling. Even though the first generation that experienced mass schooling in Moldova was educated in a pro Romanian identity environment, in the first decade after the Second World War Moldova shifted to a Moldovan national identity. The loss of Romanian consciousness of the region was due to the retreat of most of the civil servants, teachers and priests to Romania, because of deportations to Siberia and Central Asia, and because of self-imposed censorship, which stopped the transmission of national identity through oral history.

I argue that in the 1960s the generation educated in interwar Romania, which at that time represented the age segment between 30 and 40 years old, managed to influence some institutions like the Writer's Union and the Polytechnic Institute. The same generation challenged the political power in the 1980s and created the basis of modern Moldova. But not every individual self-identifies in national terms. Some of the intellectuals who remained in Chisinau after 1944 did not have a national identity but a communist one. They did not have a problem in calling their language

Moldovan and replacing the Latin script with Cyrillic script.

The shift in Moldova's identity was possible because of the institutional structure of the Soviet Union and due to the changes these institutions encountered. The administrative structure of the Soviet Union in 15 national republics, the Russification of the educational system and Gorbachev's reforms which allowed the creation of opposition groups and the challenge to political power are just a few of the changes in the institutional structure that influenced the process of national identity building in Moldova. Also the territorial structure of Moldova led to a division between Moldovans and Transnistrians. Transnistrians and Russians<sup>11</sup> controlled the political and economic life of Moldova while the Moldovans influenced the cultural life.

To understand better how Moldovan and Romanian identities emerged and who supports them I will try to analyze three theories of national identity offered by Keith A. Darden, David D. Laitin and Rogers Brubaker. Darden talks about the origins of national identity and how national loyalties were initially formed. He considers that national identity is created through mass schooling of the first literate generation (Darden 2013: 10). He adds that once the literacy level of a generation passes a 50 percent threshold then the entire community will have durable national loyalties (Darden 2013: 56). Laitin argues that national identity is temporary and can be changed through "nationalist policies" based on "national revival" and "assimilation." He thinks that national identity can be reversed during the same generation if the economic opportunities and political trends change (Laitin 1998: 14). Following the same line, Brubaker thinks that national identity is temporary and can

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<sup>11</sup> The term Russians defines the Soviet citizens that moved to Moldova after the WWII.

be changed depending on the political and institutional structure of a territory (Brubaker 1996: 23).

I consider the above theories very helpful in my initiative to interpret the national identity of Moldova and all three of them should be taken into consideration to explain the entire picture of the Moldovan national identity process. Darden talks about how national identity was formed but he thinks that once formed, the fidelity towards a certain identity does not change. This theory is very helpful in understanding the origins of national identity in Moldova and especially the national revival of the late 1980s.

Laitin's theory is a very good tool in explaining the shift of national identity among individuals and understanding the reasons which lead to the replacement of Romanian identity with Moldovan identity. But Laitin is not interested in who or what makes these changes. He looks for patterns that show changing trends in national identity and he is interested "to understand the dynamics of identity shift and the implications for the kinds of states they will be living in, and for the degree of conflict they are likely to experience in their relations with the titular population" (Laitin 1998: 32). Based on statistical data Laitin shows how a generation creates an extra layer to its identity because of economic opportunities and political coercion. At the same time, Laitin focuses on the post-Soviet era and the dynamics of identity created by the collapse of the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, Brubaker has a general approach looking at the role of institutions in the legacy of the Soviet Union. He argues that national identity was "institutionalized in the Soviet Union – territorial and political on the one hand, ethnocultural and personal on the other hand" (Brubaker 1996: 23). Brubaker's theory

explains the relationship between Moldovan and Romanian identities before and after the independence of Moldova. Just like during the Soviet Union era, Moldova's institution played a major role in the creation of national identity in the independent Moldova.

### **3.1 Mass schooling**

In late 19<sup>th</sup> century mass schooling was extending rapidly throughout Europe. School played an important role in creating trained citizens for the modern state. Through school the state also found an opportunity to form citizens devoted to the idea of national state. Darden argues that "the national loyalties instilled in a population during the introduction of mass schooling – when a community shifts from an oral to a literate mass culture" (Darden 2013: 10) - are durable and last for long periods of time. He adds that these loyalties are passed from generation to generation through oral stories. National loyalty "is passed primarily in the family" (Darden 2013: 41) and can be kept in the community regardless of the official school curriculum. In his study, the author also sets a 50 percent literacy threshold that a community has to pass in order to develop deep national loyalties (Darden 2013: 56).

Darden thinks that mass schooling plays a fundamental role in building national identity and that the process is influenced by the country which controls the education system. But it was not an easy task to pass the national identity from generation to generation in Soviet society. During the Soviet time the older generation could not express freely their national belief to the younger ones. Soviet citizens had doubled their speech having one version in public spaces and a different one at home (Figes 2007). But it was even more common to avoid at all challenging the official

interpretation of the society. To avoid being accused of “nationalist views” and deported or, in earlier times, executed, the Soviet citizens rather internalized their national identity and missed the opportunity to pass further what they were initially taught about their national identity.

Even though Darden focuses on two regions from Ukraine, he also mentions the school system in Bessarabia and concludes that the literacy rate merely reached 38 percent of the entire population when the territory was incorporated into the Soviet Union (Darden 2013: 228-229). Therefore, he thinks that Bessarabia “experienced mass schooling for the first time under USSR after the Second World War” (Darden 2013: 228-229). I think that mass schooling was implemented in Bessarabia in interwar Romania and the generation educated between 1920 and 1940 reached a level of literacy of 80 percent.

The 38 percent literacy level is the number recorded by the 1930 Romanian census for all age groups and not for only one generation. By the beginning of the Second World War the level of literacy for the entire population of Bessarabia reached 55 percent and had increased during the war (Scurtu 2012). Darden argues that only 50 percent of a generation should be literate in order to influence the entire community but in the case of Moldova he uses the percentage that applies to the entire number of population which covers several generations and not only one.

I define a generation as a group of people who were born in the same period of time between one age range in a family or society and the next one. For the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in what was known at that time Bessarabia a generation covered a period of 20 years. In a rural community from Bessarabia a typical woman was married around the age of 15 and had her first child before the age of twenty



(Scurtu 2003) and, on average, gave birth to 5.5 – 6.1 children (Ghetau 1997: 11). Even though the fertility rate was high a woman stopped delivering babies before she was 35 years old. Therefore, 22 years plus the war period, when nationalist indoctrination reached its height, covered a little more than a generation and the Romanian government had enough time to build a Romanian national identity in Bessarabia.

The 1924 Romanian education law mandated seven years of free education (Scurtu 2001). In 1921, after the first school census, in Bessarabia there were 1,747 schools and 136,172 elementary school students, which represented 34.2 percent of the entire number of children between the ages 7 and 13. In 1923 the percentage increased to 46 (Clark 1927; Scurtu 2012) and by the beginning of Second World War the enrolled students reached around 80 percent of the total number of children.

<b>Table 3: The percentage of enrolled students in the province of Bessarabia</b>					
School year	# of schools	# of teachers	# of enrolled students	Total # of children aged 7 – 13	% of enrolled students
1920-1921	1747	2746	136172	398695	34.2
1923-1924	2041	3927	203627	441958	46
1938-1939	2718	7581	346747	~440000 <sup>12</sup>	>80
Source: Clark 1927; Scurtu 2012; Author					

I estimate the literacy level of the 1920 – 1940 generation somewhere above 80 percent for several reasons. The percentage of enrolled students reflects how many children were in school at a certain moment but not all of the enrolled students who

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<sup>12</sup> Even though the number of births decreased constantly in interwar Bessarabia the number of children of school age remained the same. This was possible because of the decrease in the infant mortality rate (Ghetau 1997: 30).

had finished the seven year elementary school. I think that the number of enrolled students was higher in the first years of school compared to the last years. Hence, I consider that the percent of children who reached at least a semi-literate level is higher than the percentage of enrolled students at a certain moment.

Another reason to consider the generation of 1920 – 1940 having a high level of literacy is the World Bank data which mentions that the level of literacy in Moldova in 1989 for people ages 15 and above was 96 percent.<sup>13</sup> In 1989, the population of Moldova was 4,366,000 out of which 3,147,886 were 15 or older.<sup>14</sup> The level of illiteracy is 4 percent which means 125,915 people. The 1920 – 1940 generation represented 881,932 people. Even if we assume that the entire number of illiterate people was from the 1920 – 1940 generation there is at least a number of 756,017 literate people which represents a level of literacy of 85 percent of their generation.

A final reason to consider a high level of literacy is that the modernization of educational system took place in 1920s under the mandate of Constantin Angelescu who built more than 7000 schools all over Romania.<sup>15</sup> Most of the schools were built between 1922 and 1928 under Angelescu's second mandate. Therefore, throughout the 1930s Bessarabia already had a comprehensive school infrastructure.

According to the Romanian census of 1930 the population of Bessarabia was 2,864,402 (Scurtu 2012). The difference between the literacy level of 1930 (38

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[http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?order=wbapi\\_data\\_value\\_1989+wbapi\\_data\\_value&sort=asc&page=4](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?order=wbapi_data_value_1989+wbapi_data_value&sort=asc&page=4) 01.23.2013.

<sup>14</sup> <http://populationpyramid.net/Republic+of+Moldova/1990/> 03.15.2013

<sup>15</sup> Constantin Angelescu was Minister of Education between 1918 – 1919, 1922 – 1928 and 1933 – 1938. Because of his efforts in spreading the education system he was nicknamed “Doctor Brick.” Corina Petrica, *Dr. Constantin Angelescu, Miniesterul Instrucjiunii Publice*.

percent) and the one from 1940 (55 percent) is 17 percent. This percentage means approximately 487,000 new literate people. On average 48,700 seven grade students graduated per year for a 10 year period. To verify this number, we can take the number of students enrolled in 1937 (346,747) and divided by seven (the number of schooling years) and we will see that the average number of students who graduated yearly in 1930s is 49,500 students. Therefore, around 495,000 students experienced school between 1930 and 1940 which increased the percentage of literate people of the 1920 – 1940 generation to more than 80 percent.

Following Darden's theory Moldova experienced mass schooling in interwar Romania, which means that the region should have had by the end of the WWII a Romanian identity. As I argued above, around 80 percent of the interwar generation was schooled between 1920 and 1940. In the next subchapter I discuss how starting with 1949 the Soviet authorities build a different identity in Moldova. I argue that the Moldovan cultural leaders educated in Romania accepted to change aspects of their national identity because they were self-identifying in class terms and to join the advantages offered by the Soviet administration. But this shift in identity mostly impacted the new generations schooled under the Soviet education system and not the cohorts educated prior to 1949. An important role in the identity shift was due to the establishment of Moldova from two territories with different historical background. I follow the linguistic policies as an indicator for national identity.

### **3.2 Identity shift**

Just like Darden, David Laitin also argues that national identities are constructed. But while Darden thinks that they are created in early childhood, Laitin believes they are adopted “according to how well they serve individual purposes and reconstructed to take advantage of new opportunities” (Laitin 1998: 20). He thinks that identity changes based on what Thomas Schelling called a “tip” or “cascade.” If an important number of the members of a society believe that a significant number of their fellows are going to behave in a certain way, then they are going to change their behavior in that particular way because they are afraid of losing the new opportunities. Laitin considers that language plays the most important role in the demands of nationalist groups. He adds that nationalist projects have two directions in creating a more homogeneous country. One is the national revival and the second is the process of assimilation.

The newly created Socialist Soviet Republic of Moldova (SSRM) emerged as a result of the unification of the territories from both banks of river Dniester. The territory from the left bank was already incorporated into the Soviet Union and represented the West part of the Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic of Moldavia (ASSRM/Transnistria), while the territory from the right bank of river Dniester represented most of the former Tsarist gubernia of Bessarabia. The process of shifting the national identity in Moldova meant the transformation of Romanian identity into a Moldovan identity. From a linguistic perspective Moldovans kept using Romanian language adapted to Cyrillic script and renamed Moldovan. At an ideological level Moldovan language was the successor of the Moldovan language created in late 1920s.

The policies of the Soviet government regarding Moldovans' identity focused

on building a certain level of Russification by making Moldovans learn Russian and, at the same time, creating a Moldovan national identity in opposition to the Romanian identity. But Moldovan identity was seen differently by the Transnistrians than by Moldovans.<sup>16</sup> Both groups accepted that Romanian identity had been a result of the bourgeoisie interwar Romania but the Moldovans thought that Romanian language was different than Moldovan due to the alphabets used by the two languages, while the Transnistrians argued that Moldovan language is a Slavic language and had nothing in common with Romanian (Meurs 1994: 131).

Since late 1940s, Soviet authorities supported the elites who had a positive attitude towards the Soviet Union in interwar Romania and during WWII. Laitin calls it “The Elite – Incorporation Model of State Expansion” (Laitin 1998: 60). Bruchis argues that “writers, linguists, and literary critics who, in the interwar period, had written in unadulterated Romanian ... undertook efforts to save their language from being transformed into a Russian jargon” (Bruchis 1996: 24), which was the language spoken by the Transnistrians. Further, Bruchis considers that Moscow supported Moldovan writers in spite of their promotion of Romanian language. He adds that most of them were in favor of the 1940 incorporation of Bessarabia into the Soviet Union and, during the war, “their broadcasting on Soviet radio and writing in the Soviet press” was considered by Moscow as “a contribution to the defeat of Germany” (Bruchis 1996: 24).

In Moldova, political and military elites retreated with the Romanian army and only some parts of the intelligentsia remained behind. Most of these writers and

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<sup>16</sup> The terms “Transnistrian” and “Moldovan” do not necessarily refer to ethnic origin but to people from the two regions of Soviet Moldova.

linguists “received their primary, secondary and higher education (...) in the Rumanian literary language and up to 1940 composed their works in this language.”<sup>17</sup> The intellectuals who remained behind did not necessarily identify themselves in terms of national identity but more on class terms. Writers such as Andrei Lupan and Emilian Bucov were communist during interwar Romania and in 1941 fled into Soviet Union. They did not support Romanian national identity but defended their linguistic identity and professional belief. These intellectuals supported the Soviet regime during the war and after and accepted to call the language Moldovan and use Cyrillic script. Still, they were not willing to alter the language in which they published their work.

Moldovan intellectuals managed to control the Writer’s Union and to pass Romanian language from generation to generation even though it was called Moldovan. Their success was due to several reasons. The first reason was that they were accepted in the educational system because the Soviet Power wanted to quickly integrate the new territory. Another reason is suggested by Van Meurs. He thinks that “Stalin’s interference in the field of linguistics [forced] linguists to rethink the Soviet theory on the Moldavian language.”<sup>18</sup> Third, the Moldovans had a higher level of education with university degrees, while the left bank Moldovans who survived Stalin’s purges and the war “had only attended a communist crash course in Tiraspol” (Meurs 1994: 131). Last, the good relations between Romania and the Soviet Union after the outbreak of the conflict between Tito and Stalin played an important role in the success of the right bank intellectuals. These good relations lasted until 1964 when

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<sup>17</sup> Some writers were natives of other regions of Romania (Bruchis 1982: 79).

<sup>18</sup> The Soviet theory was that Moldovan is a Slavic language and different than Romanian which is a Romance language (Meurs 1994: 131 and Stalin 1950).

Romania rejected Khrushchev's plan to divide labor inside the Communist camp. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union Moscow policies on Chisinau were influenced by the relations between Romania and the Soviet Union.

Laitin's theory of "elite – incorporation" explains the apparent shift in national identity of the Moldovan intellectual elites. The only reason which kept them from moving even closer to a Transnistrian-Moldovan identity was their incapability to change what Laitin calls "personal identity." "A person who is x today will surely be x tomorrow" (Laitin 1998: 14). But they transmitted to new young generations a Moldovan identity.

From a cultural point of view the elites from the right bank managed to overcome those from the left bank, but the political life and the administration was controlled from the beginning by Transnistrians. Transnistria was already part of the Soviet Union for almost three decades when Moldova was incorporated into the Soviet Union. Transnistria already had strong ties with Moscow and reliable and well-trained political activists and bureaucrats in Soviet political and administrative affairs. In political life and the administration, Transnistrians controlled the Republic for its entire existence. Until November 1989 when Petru Lucinschi became the First Secretary of the Communist Party of SSRM, there had never been a First Secretary originally from the right bank of Dnister.<sup>19</sup> Soviet cadres from Transnistria played a key role in transforming both SSR Moldova and Romania into communist territories. In Romania, the top three intelligence officers Gheorghe Pintilie (Pantelei Bodnarenko), Alexandru Nicolschi (Boris Grünberg) and Vladimir Mazuru (Vladimir

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<sup>19</sup> Even though Lucinschi was originally from the right bank he lived in Moscow and Dushanbe between 1976 and 1989 (Brezianu and Spânu 2010: 217).

Mazurov), who reformed and led Romanian internal intelligence agency from its creation in 1948 until 1963, came to Romania after the war from the Soviet Union. Mazuru was born in Chisinau in an ethnic Ukrainian family and was educated in Romania but Pintilie and Nicolschi were both born in Tiraspol and were part of the Soviet cadres cohort designated to implement communism in SSRM and Socialist Romania.

While for most of the right bank intellectuals the shift of identity was superficial, for the rest of Moldovans the shift of identity was much deeper and it went along with the process of Russification. Learning Russian represented an opportunity for Moldovans to have access to positions in administration and economy. Laitin calls it “different recruitments practices” and adds that “one motivation for titulars to learn Russian was to become Soviet officials” (Laitin 1998: 70).

By learning in schools which used Russian as the instruction of language, Moldovans moved further away from the Romanian language and therefore from Romanian identity. In a matter of a generation, most of the Moldovans became diglossics and alongside with Russian language and culture they accepted the Moldovan identity. The shift was possible due to economic opportunities but also because of political coercion. Soviet society was not based on plurality and the Moldovans, who showed affiliation to the Romanian identity, were accused of nationalism and excluded from the society. Another important role in the shift of national identity in Moldova was played by the Soviet institutional construction.



### 3.3 Institutionalized nationalism

The Soviet Union was a state based primarily on class, not ethnicity. Party membership was more important than ethnic origins. But nationalism played an important role in Soviet internal affairs. The administrative borders incorporated ethnicity and nationality was an important criterion in the selection and promotion in administration and party affairs. The Soviet Union was what Brubaker calls a “nationalizing state.” Multilingualism was not part of the Soviet central government and Russification was encouraged in school and throughout the society. In this subchapter I argue that the Soviet Union’s institutional organization encouraged a Soviet identity based on Russian language but allowed to some social groups to perpetuate the identity of the constituent nationality. Most of the Moldovan society encountered a process of Russification and only some institutions such as the Writer’s Union were allowed to have a Moldovan identity. In late 1980s the writers and linguists would challenge the political institutions based on a nationalistic agenda.

Brubaker’s research focuses on the role of the state in institutionalizing national identity. In his book *Nationalism Reframed*, he is interested in how “nationhood as a political and cultural form [is] institutionalized within and among states” (Brubaker 1996: 16). He considers that the Soviet Union created national boundaries drawing more than 50 territorial divisions based on ethnic criteria. Alongside the territorial nationalism of big national communities, the Soviet Union imposed on each of its citizens a permanent national identity at an individual level. In 1932 the Soviet government recorded nationality in all internal passports. This categorization represented a form of discrimination for the non-titular inhabitants (Brubaker 1996: 31) but at the same time created a form of solidarity for the non-

Russians from the territories incorporated after WWII.

Moldovans had fewer chances for a successful career outside their national Republic. Even in Moldova, those who originated from the right bank of Dniester did not have the same opportunities as Transnistrians and Russians had in being promoted in management positions. Moldovan was not an interethnic liaison and the administration language was Russian. Moreover, after WWII Moldova did not have well prepared cadres for the administration and the ones that existed were formed in Transnistria. Transnistrians were more trusted by the Soviet central government. This institutionalized lack of opportunities was one of the main reasons of the movement from late 1980s in asking for more national rights.

Article 36 of the Soviet Constitution of 1977 states that the “citizens of the USSR of different races and nationalities have equal rights. Exercise of these rights is ensured (...) by the possibility to use their native language and the languages of other people in the USSR.” The Moldovans were entitled to administer and control their republic only at a theoretical level. In reality, Russian language was the main language used in administration, school, and daily conversation (Anderson and Silver 1984: 1022). The influence of Russian language increased in the Soviet Union starting with 1938 when Russian “was made compulsory in all non-Russian schools across the Soviet Union” (Dietrich 2005: 2).

The Moldovans from the right side of Dniester could use their language and get promoted only in the fields they controlled after the late 1940s such as technical education, fine arts, and writing. Their professional outlet was reduced to the small world of the Moldovan intellectuals. The distribution of management positions did not follow Moldova’s ethnic configuration. In the Soviet Union, ethnic Russians

represented 60.9 percent of the members of the Communist Party and 53.4 percent of the overall population (Bruchis 1984: 53). Moldovans represented 1.1 percent of the population of the Soviet Union and 0.4 percent of the members of the Soviet Union Communist Party. As Bruchis mentions, the influence of ethnic Russians was increased by the fact “that they occupy key posts not only in the central, leading organs (both party and state), but also in the organs of the non-Russian administrative-territorial formations” (Bruchis 1984: 54).

In 1980, in Moldova “of the total number of ministers (31 persons), 20 (or 64.5 percent) were Russians and Ukrainians although they together constituted only 27 percent of the total population” (Bruchis 1984: 56) and most of them were newcomers from other Soviet Republics. Ethnic Moldovans held 11 ministry position or 35.5 percent while the ethnic Moldovans represented 63.9 percent of the entire population of Moldova. Among them, some were Russified Moldovans from Transnistria who did not speak Moldovan.

The Soviet Union differentiated Moldovan identity from Romanian identity ideologically and geographically. The Soviet government decided to divide the territories incorporated from Romania in June 1940 and to designate different nationalities to the newly created administrative regions. The inhabitants of the right bank of Dniester were named Moldovans and their language Moldovan while the inhabitants from Northern Bucovina and Herta Region were allowed to use the word Romanian to describe their ethnic origins and language. Therefore, nationality was not a matter of ethnicity but of territorial boundaries.

#### 4. “National” revivals

Mark Beissinger thinks that nationalism has a tidal character where the term “tide of nationalism” refers to “multiple waves of nationalist mobilization whose content and outcome influence one another” (Beissinger 2002: 27). He also thinks that the “tide” has “three interactive dimensions of structural influence on action: pre-existing structural conditions; the constraints imposed by institutions; and the impact of action itself on subsequent action” or events (Beissinger 2002: 12). Beissinger’s theory is very helpful to understand the dynamics of nationalism in Soviet Moldova.

In this chapter I argue that there were three key moments in the process of nation building in Soviet Moldova. The first moment happened in the first years after the Second World War when Transnistrians challenged Moldovans on the language issue and the domination of the latter created the pre-existing structural conditions of the 1960s nationalistic tendencies of the Moldovan society. The second key moment was initiated by Khrushchev’s “Secret Speech.” The condemnation of Stalinist abuses and the return to the homeland of many political prisoners created the illusion of a freer society, which loosened “the constraint imposed by institutions.” The third key moment was in the late 1980s when Gorbachev’s reforms created social unrest and what Beissinger calls “events.”

The Soviet Union undertook policies of merging (слияние) the Soviet nationalities through Russification in spite of the umbrella of ethnically created national republics.<sup>20</sup> The two main policies applied by the Soviet Union in the territories incorporated after the WWII focused on Russification and on the exclusion of some social categories not accepted by the Communist ideology. In Moldova, the

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<sup>20</sup> Except for the period between 1933 and 1938 when the central government implemented policies of nationalization (коренизация).

ethnic policy was applied intensely because of the Romanian identity created by Romania in the interwar period. Thus, the Soviet power policies in Moldova focused on the spread of Russian language, the elimination of the social categories who did not suit the Communist ideology and de-Romanization. The de-Romanization could not be avoided because of the Soviet Union's position towards Romania/Bessarabia during the interwar period. The Soviet Union never accepted the loss of Bessarabia and in 1924 created its own Moldovan territorial entity. After WWII, the Soviet Union had no reason in changing policies towards Bessarabia especially because the incorporation of a Moldovan Bessarabia was easier to legitimized than a Romanian Bessarabia.

Another reason for de-Romanization was the existence of Romania. Moldovans were the only Soviet citizens who could have a cultural and political center inside the Soviet Union and outside. The border between Romania and the Soviet Union was closed and direct contacts between Bucharest and Chisinau were not allowed. In Chisinau, books from all over the Communist camp could be found except from Romania. The merging of Moldovans into the Soviet identity would have been much harder with a tolerated Romanian identity inside the Moldovan Republic. Moldovan identity was created in opposition to Romanian identity and took place alongside with the import of Soviet identity.

Between the creation of the AMSSR in 1924 and the early 1950s, Moldovan identity had different meanings. After the incorporation of Bessarabia the official definition for Moldovan identity remained the same but was interpreted differently by various groups. The members of the Writers Union considered Moldovan different than Romanian in the late 1940s but in the 1960s the new generation of writers

thought that the two languages were the same. In early 1990s they openly called it Romanian.

Just like Moldovan identity had different meanings throughout time also the competition for national identity in Moldova was not all the time between Romanian and Moldovan. If in the first years after WWII the identity question was about how strong were the Slavic and Latin origins of Moldovan language, in the last four decades of the Soviet Union the challenge was represented by the resistance of Moldovan identity and to some extent Moldovan society in dealing with the policies of Russification.

#### **4.1 Implementing identity in the newly established Soviet Moldova**

The Moldovan SSR was created from two different territorial entities alongside river Dniester. Both territories had their own history, representatives and their own definition for the cultural identity of Moldovan SSR. The background of the group leaders is relevant to understand better the source of these opposing definitions. One of the leaders of Moldovans<sup>21</sup> was Adrian Lupan while the prominent figures of Transnistrians<sup>22</sup> were Ivan Dmitrievic Ciobanu and Iachim Grosul. All three of them are ethnic Moldovans from the same generation but educated in different countries.

Andrei Lupan was born in 1912 in Mihoreni in the Bessarabia oblast of the former Tsarist Empire. He was educated in the interwar Romania and published his first poem in 1932. One year later he joined the Communist Party of Romania (PCdR).

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<sup>21</sup> “Moldovans” describes a group of people from the right bank of Dniester regardless of their ethnicity.

<sup>22</sup> “Transnistrians” describes a group of people from the left bank of Dniester regardless of their ethnicity.

In 1940, when Bessarabia was incorporated into the Soviet Union, Lupan remained in Chisinau and one year later followed the Soviet troops in their retreat from Bessarabia. During the war he supported the Soviet state against Romania. His main contribution to the Soviet war effort was made between 1943 and 1944 when he became part of the Radio Moscow team, Romanian language section. After the war he returned to Chisinau and served as the head of the Moldovan Writers Union from 1946 to 1955 and from 1958 to 1961.<sup>23</sup>

Lupan was a “believer” in the communist idea. He did not identify himself in nationalist terms but at the same time he did not oppose the idea of national identity. Because he was a communist he accepted the official position of the Communist Party on Moldovan national identity. His war time contribution and his ideological belief allowed him to play an important role in the writers’ community. Still, his communist belief did not protect him from attacks by the Transnistrian writers.<sup>24</sup> Lupan and most of his fellow writers educated in Romania were accused of being “national bourgeois.” They were blamed for their literary published works but in reality it was just a struggle for power between the two groups.<sup>25</sup> It is hard to estimate how strong was the Romanian identity of the writers educated in Romania because none of them clearly expressed their support for Romanian identity during the Soviet Union. Those who argued that Moldovan and Romanian language were the same were deported in

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.andreilupan.com/loaditem.do?id=399500005> 02.10.2013.

<sup>24</sup> Some of the most vocal Transnistrians were Ivan Dmitrievici Ciobanu, Ion Canna, Ioachim Grosul and Lev Barschi (Канна, Чобан, and Егоров 1948).

<sup>25</sup> Andrei Lupan, Bogdan Istru, Emilian Bucov, Ion Constantin Ciobanu and Ramil Portnoi were some of the Moldovan writers educated in Romania.

1940 and 1941.<sup>26</sup>

Ciobanu was born in 1910 near Odessa and Grosul was born in 1912 in Caragas near Tiraspol. Both were educated in the Soviet Union and graduated from Tiraspol Pedagogical Institute in 1932 and 1937, respectively. They continued their academic activities in Tiraspol and Moscow until 1944 when they moved to Chisinau (Colesnic 1997: 236). The Transnistrians were more consistent in promoting their interpretation of Moldovan identity and the role of Russian language. Even in the 1980s, they supported the Russian language and the benefits of merging of the two languages.

In the 1940s, both groups agreed that the language of the Republic was Moldovan but they had different definitions for what Moldovan language meant. Transnistrians argued that Moldovan is a Slavic language with a significant import of Russian words (Чебан 1950), while Moldovans considerate it a Romance language with Cyrillic script. The language issue was the main confrontation between the two groups and even though the language dispute was settled in early 1950s, the rivalries remained and were perpetuated in the institutions that each group controlled. Transnistrians controlled the Institute for History, Language and Literature, where Ivan Dmitrievici Ciobanu was director from 1946 to 1952. They also controlled the Faculty of History and Philology, Moldova State University where Iachim Grosul was Dean between 1946 and 1959 and Moldovan Academy of Science where Grosul was vice-president and then president between 1949 and 1976. The Moldovans controlled the journal *Dniester* and the Writers' Union, where Adrian Lupan was president

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<sup>26</sup> See the cases of Nicolai Costenco, Mihai Curicheru, Emil Gane, Eremia Cekan, and Petre Stefanuca (Vihrest 2010)



between 1946 – 1955 and 1958 – 1961 followed by Ion Constantin Ciobanu (1961 – 1965) and Pavel Bot (1965 – 1987) (Colesnic 1997: 97).

In 1951, almost 70 percent of Moldova's teachers came from other Soviet republics. The revitalization of the education system was used by the Soviet authorities to implement Communism and was also an opportunity to Russify and Moldovanize the new generations. In 1945, the universities undertook a process of transformation and adaptation to Soviet ideology (Dolghi 2009). Later, in 1949 and 1950 the teachers' body from elementary and secondary schools was renewed. The first step was made in July 1949 when 217 teachers were deported to Siberia and Central Asia (Varta 2011). In December the same year, Cojocaru, the Moldovan Vice-Minister of Education, mentioned that "out of 13,300 teachers ... 8,430 lived in Bessarabia between 1918 and 1940, which represents 70 percent of the total number."<sup>27</sup> Six months later Minister of Education Lazarev mentioned that the education system lacks 3,000 teachers and that "now, since the Party Committees decided to release in big number hostile elements, the lack of teachers will increase."<sup>28</sup> In 1949 there were almost 5,000 non-local teachers in Moldova's schools who had not lived in Moldova and by 1951 the number increased by at least 3,000 more. Alongside the massive number of non-ethnic Moldovan teachers the government ensured that all young kids were reeducated by a new curriculum. The fifth and sixth year middle school students had to repeat the fourth year following the Soviet curriculum. At the same time Russian language became compulsory.

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<sup>27</sup> A.O.S.P.M., *fond. 51, inv. 8, file 23*, p. 240  
<http://www.basarabiaistorica.ro/en/component/content/article/129-migraie-organizat-epurarea-cadrelor-didactice-deznaionalizarea> 03.11.2013.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem. file 97, p. 185.*

## 4.2 Post-Stalin reforms and the rise of nationalism

Khrushchev's Secret Speech and the return of political prisoners created the impression that national belief could be publically expressed. Moldovans had access to some works of Romanian 19<sup>th</sup> century classical writers, such as Eminescu, Alecsandri and Creangă, and even though they were presented as Moldovan writers the access to their works represented a connection with Romanian identity. Grigore Vieru, one of the leaders of the 1980s national revival, said that he read for the first time Romanian writers during his college years after Stalin's death.<sup>29</sup>

Marx and Engels were available in Romanian language and they played an important role in the national awareness of young Moldovan intellectuals. The penetrations of uncensored Marxist writings contradicted the arguments that Moldovans are not Romanians. On one hand the Soviet power legitimized itself with Marxist ideology and promoted Moldovan identity different than Romanian identity. On the other hand Marx wrote about Bessarabia considering the inhabitants Romanians speaking Romanian (Oțetea 1964). This atmosphere encouraged Moldovan writers to ask at the Third Congress of the Moldovan Writers Union from 1965 for the endorsement of the Latin script (Besleaga 2010).

The effects of the post-Stalinist Thaw could be seen also in the educational system. In 1964 the Polytechnic Institute in Chisinau was established and Sergiu Radautan became the first rector. From the beginning he promoted locals among the faculty staff and encouraged the enrollment of ethnic Moldovans (Manolea 2011; Casul 2012). At the Polytechnic Institute the students openly questioned Moldovan identity, which led in 1973 to the dismissal of Radautan from the University.

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<sup>29</sup> Grigore Vieru, <http://www.grigorevieru.md/despre-vieru/marturisiri/90-grigore-vieru-testamentul> 03.11.2013.

The first pro-Romanian identity movement of post-WWII took place from 1969 to 1971 when an underground nationalist-irredentist movement called “National Patriotic Front from Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina” existed on the territory of the Moldavian SSR and the Ukrainian SSR. The leaders of the movement were young Moldovan intellectuals trying to unify territories of MSSR and USSR with Romania. Among the members of the group were Gheroghe Ghimpu one of the leaders of the Popular Front from the 1980s and Mircea Druc, Prime-Minister between 1990 and 1991. The short-lived group was dismantled and most of its 100 members sent into the Gulag (Brezianu and Spânu 2010: 91).

#### **4.3 Nationalism and the struggle for political power during Perestroika**

Brezhnev’s stagnation era represented a period with no major identity confrontation for the Moldovan society. Once the constraints imposed by the Soviet political institutions loosened in the second half of the 1980s contentious events spread across the Soviet Union based on a nationalist agenda. The first pan-Romanian steps made by intelligentsia took place after the October 1986 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Moldovan Communist Party, when Simeon Grosu, the First Secretary of Moldovan Communist Party, embraced Gorbachev’s openness (гласность) and criticized Party members for their reluctance to present the party’s truth.

The former members of the “National Patriotic Front from Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina,” the writers and the linguists made the central group of the newly formed “Popular Front of Moldova” (PFM). This group was represented by those who

were born in the late thirties and forties.<sup>30</sup> They were members of the first generation educated by those writers who studied in interwar Romanian schools and had the disputes with the Transnistrians in the late forties and fifties. PFM members were the promoters of pro-Romanian identity measures. Their influence can be seen in the insertion of the phrase “Romanian language” in the “Declaration of Independence” of Moldova, adoption of the Latin alphabet, the replacement of Soviet state symbols with Romanian state symbols, the change of the street names from Soviet names to Romanian ones, etc. Even though the PFM enjoyed popular support it is arguable if they were supported because of their nationalist views or because of the alternative they offered to the representatives of the Soviet central government in Moldova.

Therefore, in the second half of 1980s in SSRM one could distinguish two emerging groups competing for popular legitimacy. One group was represented by the members of the nomenklatura, who were in control of the economy and administration and decided on the distribution of the resources. Simeon Grosu, ethnic Moldovan from Ukraine, led the Party not only into the *openness* but also to challenge the national question (Bruchis 1996: 32). As a bureaucrat devoted to the hard line of Communism he tackled the national question, underlining that it is necessary to “instill a deep understanding in students and pupils of the Russian language’s role as a means of strengthening the international unity of the Soviet people” (Bruchis 1996: 32)

Starting with 1987, the writers published their first nationalistic texts in the journal *Literature and Art* (*Literatură și Artă*), whose chief editor was Nicolae Dabija.

One of the most emblematic articles of that year was published under the signature of

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<sup>30</sup> The most representative were Grigore Vieru, Ion Aldea-Teodorovici, Doina Aldea-Teodorovici, Dumitru Matcovschi, Valentin Mândăcanu, Constantin Tănase, Gheorghe Ghimpu, Nicolae Costin, Ion Ungureanu, Nicolae Dabija, Leonida Lari, Silviu Berejan, Ion Demeniuc, Nicolae Matcaș and Vasile Bahnaru.

Dumitru Matcovschi on April 23 (Dabija 2012). In “Hardship of History” (Povara istoriei), Matcovschi presented the history of Moldova from a pan-Romanian perspective. But the text that was considered the turning point in the intellectuals’ attitude towards the national question was Valentin Mândăcanu’s 80 page article “The Clothes of Our Being” (Veșmântul ființei noastre). The article was published in May 1988 in the journal *Dniester*, whose recently appointed chief editor was Dumitru Matcovschi. “The Clothes of Our Being” was an article which critiqued the linguists from Transnistria and talks about Moldovan language as the key component of Moldovan identity. He also argued that the correct script for Moldovan was Latin and that Moldovan was not distinct from Romanian.

On the pro-Soviet side, Simeon Grosu through the Central Committee of the Moldovan Communist Party, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and the Republic’s Council of Ministers adopted in November 1988 a collection of documents called *Thesis* (Bruchis 1996: 24). *Thesis* represented a set of official statements in which it was argued that Romanian and Moldovan language are two different languages and the right way of writing Moldovan is to use Cyrillic letters.

Soviet policies on the national identity of Moldova resulted at a perception level in a merging of the Soviet identity with the Moldovan identity. The ostracism of Moldovans did not leave any space for the Soviet opposition to legitimize with the Moldovan identity. If other European Soviet Republics such as Ukraine, the Baltic States and Russia could oppose a national identity unadulterated by the Soviet identity, the Moldovans did not have this option because Moldovan language and Moldovan national identity were the creation of the Soviet state.

The existence of Soviet national republics allowed the national idea to exist

for the entire period of the Soviet Union and the marginalization of Moldovans from the right bank created the pre-existing structural conditions which erupted in a national movement in late 1980s based on Romanian identity. In spite of the Moldovanization and Russification of the educational system and society, the few institutions controlled by the locals allowed the creation of opposition movement from a community that was not self-identifying with the central government. The Soviet Union ended up creating a Soviet, Moldovan and also a Romanian identity because of its policies. The Moldovans were never trusted by the Soviet power which pushed the post-WWII generations to return to the Romanian identity. Therefore, the collapse of the Soviet Union caught Moldova not only in a national revival but foremost in a confrontation between those who identified as locals and the representatives of the central government in Moldova.

## **5. The process of national identity building**

In the following chapter I argue that the post-independence Moldovan education system teaches the young Moldovans that the legitimate name of their native language is “Romanian. The courses “Romanian language and literature” and “History of Romanians” are the most important components of the curriculum that create Romanian national identity in Moldova. I first discuss the time period 1990 – 1994 when Education shifted from a Soviet style to a Romanian curriculum and then I look at how the Romanized education system was defended by street protests. I argue that between 1990 and 1994 Popular Front members controlled the Moldovan political arena and managed to apply deep institutional reforms. After the 1994 elections, a small but young and dynamic group of students succeeded to influence government decisions through street protests. Small pro-Romanian identity parties defended the education system from the inside of the parliament. At the end of the chapter I show how these policies managed to significantly influence the percentages of Moldovans who name their native language Romanian.

The centralized system of education is the main creator of national identity. Political leaders recognize identity trends and adjust their speech to meet the expectations of their voters in Moldova. However, political parties and their leaders also play an important role in creating and maintaining national identity. This chapter begins with an analysis of the political party leadership in promoting national identity in Moldova after independence. Political leaders use national identity to legitimize their policies and, through their parties, increase nationalistic messages perpetuating national identity. Political parties distribute resources through the state budget and office positions to those who support their parties. Through financial resources and

power distribution political elites influence the process of building national identity. Schools, newspapers, TV stations, the Academy of Science and Writers' Union depend on budget distributions and on legislative frameworks.

The education system is the main institution which creates and perpetuates national identity. Through school, a standardized or national language is taught as well as a national history and literature. The Soviet state policies were less based on national identity and more on Soviet class identity which implied linguistic and cultural Russification. In the second half of 1980s this process was stopped and eventually reversed towards the collapse of the Soviet Union.

### **5.1 Political parties and national identity**

In Moldova, the “national revival” was initiated in 1985 based on environmental issues and was continued in 1988 by a movement of young intellectuals around the “Alex Mateevici” club. The environmental group challenged Moscow policies on the exploitation of natural resources and pollution, while the “Alex Mateevici” club questioned the differences between Moldovan and Romanian and the legitimacy of the incorporation of Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, Herta region into the Soviet Union.

Journals and magazines published by the Writers Union such as *Dniester* and *Literature and Art*, represented the main modality through which the writers spread their ideas and mobilized masses. *Literature and Art* had 186,000 subscriptions in early 1989, and after the switch to Latin script in September 1989 the magazine



reached 260,000 weekly copies.<sup>31</sup> The two journals were the main communication platform of Moldovans from the right bank of the Dniester. In May 1989, inside the Writers Union headquarters, the Popular Front of Moldova was created. In the following months representatives of the Popular Front travelled across Moldova to promote their demands for language reforms.

Moldova's internal debate on linguistic identity increased in 1989 and on August 31, under the pressure of a rally of 800,000 people, the Moldovan Supreme Soviet adopted the Language Law (Chinn and Kaiser 1996: 171). The Language Law made Moldovan language with Latin script official but kept Russian language for inter-ethnic communication.<sup>32</sup> During the debates, writers such as Andrei Lupan, Nicolae Dabija, Grigore Vieru and Mihai Cimpoi argued for Moldovan language with Latin script. Their contribution to the shift from a Cyrillic script to a Latin one was significant not only during the Parliamentary session but also in the previous years. They succeeded to mobilize an impressive number of people and to pressure the Moldovan Supreme Soviet to address their language demands.

The involvement in political life of the writers started in early 1989 when Grigore Vieru, Ion Druță, Mihai Cimpoi, Ion Hadârcă, Leonida Lari, Ion Ciobanu, Nicolae Dabija and Anton Grăjdieru were elected to the Congress of People's Deputies of the Soviet Union. Being a deputy allowed them to consolidate their position inside Moldova. The First-Secretary of the Moldovan Communist Party, Simeon Grosu, resigned in November 1989. His resignation allowed the Popular

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<sup>31</sup> Nicolae Dabija, "1989 – Anul cand Dumnezeu a fost roman" in *Literatura si Arta*.

<sup>32</sup> *Legea 3465 din 01.09.1989 cu privire la functionarea limbilor vorbite pe teritoriul RSS Moldovenesti*, <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=312813> 03.11.2013.

Front to become more influential and to gain good results in the following year's Moldovan elections. The Popular Front candidates won 27 percent of the 380 deputies in the Moldovan parliament and alongside the moderate communists, the Popular Front managed to form the majority (Fedor 1995).

In May 1990, Mircea Druc a member of the Popular Front was elected Prime Minister of Moldova and he pushed for policies of Romanization. During his mandate Romania's state symbols, such as the anthem, currency name and flag, were adopted and cultural exchange was intensified, with an important number of teachers sent to Romania to improve their Romanian language skills. All over Moldova, the names of streets, schools and other public spaces were changed from Soviet names to Romanian ones (Eremia 2012). Another member of the Popular Front, linguist Nicolae Matcas, was named Minister of Education and he was a key player in reforming the school curriculum, introducing the study of Romanian language and literature and History of Romanians.

The 1990 election established the grounds of the Moldovan political parties to develop their ideology and adopt an ethnic message. The pro Romanian identity message has been monopolized by the Christian-Democrat, Liberal Democratic and Liberal parties, while the Socialist and Communist parties promoted a Moldovan identity. The non-identity parties were moderate and ambiguous in adopting an ethnic rhetoric. Political parties that have avoided a clear ethnic message have not lasted more than one electoral cycle. With the exception of the Democratic Party, which most of the time ran in coalition with other parties, the non-identity parties have not enjoyed a devoted public support, while the Communist and Christian-Democrat parties have had an ethnic oriented electorate sensitive to identity messages.

The Moldovan identity was represented from 1990 to 1994 by the Communist Party (CP), from 1994 to 1998 by the Agrarian Party (AP) and from 1995 onwards again by the CP. In the early 1990s the CP was divided between hard liners and moderates, but starting in 1995 the party acted unitarily and its sole leader was Vladimir Voronin, a former police officer during the Soviet Union. Between 1990 and 1994 the most representative figure of the group which followed the Soviet line inside the Communist Party was Igor Smirnov, elected deputy from the city of Tiraspol, who between 1991 and 2011 was the president of the breakaway territory of Transnistria. During the 1990 - 1994 legislature, the moderate communists were represented by the first President of independent Moldova, Mircea Snegur, and the second President, Petru Lucinschi. The Agrarian Party had among its members people like Vasile Stati, a historian by profession and one of the main promoters of a Moldovan identity distinct from Romanian. Other members of the AP were Petru Lucinschi and Dumitru Diacov, but they represented the moderate side of the party.

The Romanian identity was represented by the Popular Front and its successor, the Christian Democrat Popular Party (CDPP), the Peasants and Intellectuals Party and other small parties that have made it into the parliament only as members of blocks or alliances. After voting with the Communist candidate for the presidential seat in 2005, the CDPP which had been the longest lasting party promoting Romanian identity, did not pass the threshold in the 2009 elections. The leader of the CDPP, Iurie Rosca, participated as a young journalist in the nationalist rallies in 1989 and in early 2000 organized several important protests. But other two pro-Romanian identity parties have appeared on the political arena: the Liberal Party (LP) and Liberal Democrat Party (PLD). Both parties managed to gain seats in the

2009 and 2010 parliaments. The president of the LP is Mihai Ghimpu, one of the members of the Popular Front of the Soviet Moldova. He is the brother of Gheorghe Ghimpu, the former political prisoner who between 1969 and 1971 organized the National Patriotic Front of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, promoting unification with Romania. The vice-president of the LP and mayor of Chisinau since 2007 is Ghimpu's nephew Dorin Chirtoaca. Vlad Filat is the PLD leader and he is relatively new on the political scene of Moldova. Both Vlad Filat and Dorin Chirtoaca studied in Romania and represent the young wave of political leaders of Moldova.

Table 4: Classification of political parties based on national identity			
	Pro-Romanian identity political parties	Pro-Moldovan identity political parties	Non-identity political parties
February 1994	1) Peasant's and Intellectual's Bloc" Electoral Bloc (BTI) 2) "Alliance of the Christian-Democratic People's Front" Electoral Bloc (BeAFPCD)	1) Agrarian Democratic Party of Moldova (PDAM) 2) "Socialist Party and Unitate-Edinstvo (Unity)" Electoral Bloc (BePSMUE)	
March 1998	1) Party of Democratic Forces (PFD) 2) "Democratic Convention of Moldova" Electoral Bloc (BeCDM)	Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM)	"For a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova" Electoral Bloc (BepMDP)
February 2001	Christian Democratic People's Party (PPCD)	PCRM	"Braghis Alliance" Electoral Bloc
March 2005	PPCD	PCRM	"Moldova Democrata" (Democratic Moldova)" Electoral Bloc (BMD)
April 2009	1) Liberal Party (PL) 2) Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM)	PCRM	"Moldova Noastra (Our Moldova)" Alliance (AMN)
July 2009	1) PL 2) PLDM	PCRM	1) AMN 2) Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM)
November 2010	1) PL 2) PLDM	PCRM	PDM
Source: <a href="http://www.e-democracy.md/en/elections/parliamentary/">http://www.e-democracy.md/en/elections/parliamentary/</a> Categorization of parties based on identity message is the author's interpretation.			

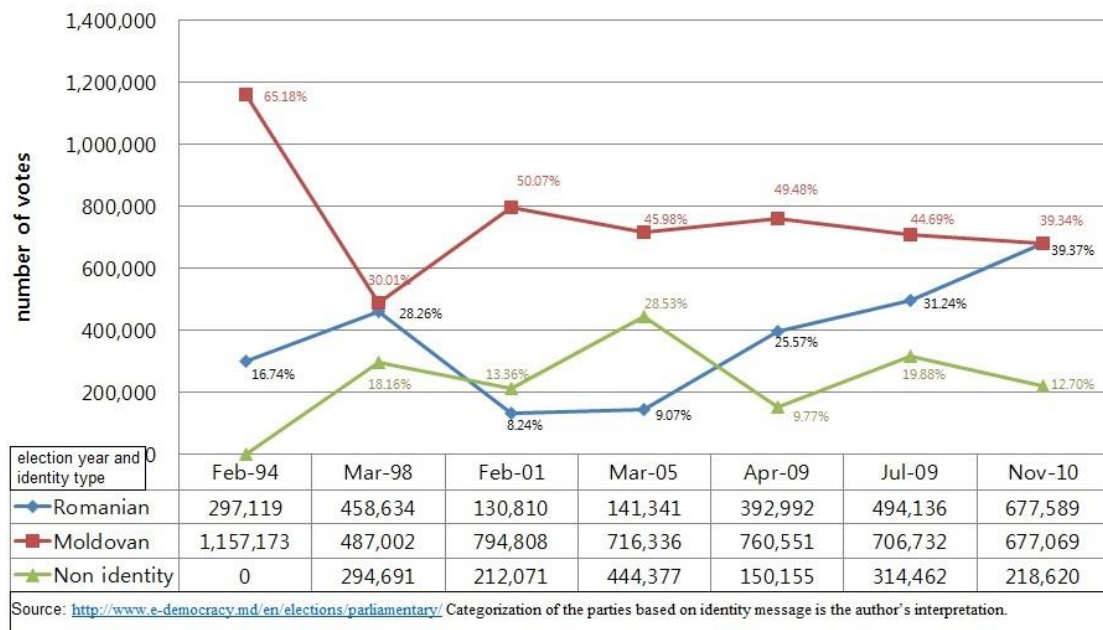
The identity message of the Democratic Party (DP) has been constantly ambiguous. Marian Lupu, the president of the party starting in June 2009, declared in 2010 that in Moldova people speak Romanian from a scientific perspective but Moldovan from a political view. Two years later in 2012, he declared that he had “changed his mind” and he thought that Moldovan was spoken also from a scientific point of view. Lupu is a former member of the CP and studied in Moscow. But Dumitru Diacov, the oldest member of the party is the leader who shaped ideologically the DP. Diacov was born in Kurgan Oblast, Russia, in 1952 in a family deported from Moldova. He returned to Moldova with his family during des-Stalinization and studied in Chisinau and Minsk and then he worked in Chisinau, Moscow and, between 1989 and 1993, Bucharest. He was elected deputy in 1994 on the list of the Agrarian Party and supported the Communist Party in 2005.

After every electoral cycle the Parliament is made of at least one group representing Moldovan identity and Romanian identity. For the last twenty years Moldovans voted relatively consistently following ethnic messages. Out of 101 seats<sup>33</sup> the Moldovan identity parties have received between 40 (1998 elections) and 71 (2001) mandates and the Romanian identity parties have had between 11 (2001) and 44 (2010) mandates. The non-ethnic identity parties were represented by different groups with nonexistent or moderate ethnic message and have won between 15 (2010) and 28 (1994) seats.

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<sup>33</sup> In 1994 there were 104 seats and in 1998 the number of deputies was reduced to 101.

**Table 5: Elections results based on identity type by number of votes and percentage**



After 20 years it can be observed an increase in the number of Moldovans who accept Romanian language and vote for the political parties that run on a pro-Romanian identity agenda. In 1990, the members of the Popular Front received 27 percent of the votes and in 1994 the two pro-Romanian identity parties received together 16.7 percent or 297,119 votes.<sup>34</sup>

The popularity of political parties has not been based only on an ethnic message. Economic factors significantly influenced the election results. Moldovan industry was based on the left side of the Dniester River and the outcome of the civil war paralyzed the Moldovan economy. The pro-Romanian identity parties had low results in the 1994 elections because of the Transnistrian war and the Agrarian Party overwhelmingly won the elections. The Agrarian Party was formed by the former moderate members of the Soviet Moldovan Communist Party and shortly after the

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.e-democracy.md/en/elections/parliamentary/> 03.11.2013 and Table 5.

2004 elections, the Agrarian Party fractioned into several parties including the Communist Party from the Republic of Moldova.

The significant drop in the number of votes for the pro-Moldovan identity parties in the 1998 election was due to at least three reasons: the division of the pro-Moldovan identity parties into several parties, including some that did not have a strong identity message; a drop in the overall number of votes in the 1998 elections compared with the 1994 elections; and the poor economic situation of Moldova throughout the 1990s. Some of the former political leaders of the Agrarian Party, such as Dumitru Diacov, formed a new party that was part of an alliance, which was called BepMDP in the 1998 elections. The BepMDP did not have an ethnic identity message, and received almost 300,000 votes from the pro-Moldovan identity parties. In 1994 elections, there were around 1,775,000 votes while in 1998, there were around 150,000 less votes casted. Finally, Moldovan economy was dependent on the Russian and CIS economies and followed a descending trend throughout the 1990s.

The triumphal comeback of the Communist Party can be explained by several factors. The access to power of the Communist Party was partly possible because of the nostalgia for the Soviet past and because the Communist Party's leaders were the only leaders who had not been in power. For the first time a party received almost 800,000 votes. I speculate that the electorate of the BepMDP returned to a pro-Moldovan identity party, the CP. At the same time, a group that broke away from the pro-Romanian identity parties that had been elected in the 1998 elections adopted a non-identity program. In 2001, this group was called Braghis Alliance, which later became known as the Democratic Moldova Electoral Bloc in 2005, and then Our Moldova Alliance in 2009. These former pro-Romanian identity parties received

between 150,000 and 444,000 votes.

The pro-Moldovan identity parties' growing popularity throughout the 2000s can be explained by economic stability but also because the old electorate educated in interwar Romania had significantly reduced. Theoretically, this electorate should have voted for the pro-Romanian identity parties. In the 2010 parliamentary elections, the LP and the PLD received over 39 percent (or 677,589 votes), which represents the best result the pro-Romanian parties have ever achieved. The increase in the number of votes was possible due to the merging of the non-identity Alliance Our Moldova into the PLD but also because more than 100,000 young Moldovans became eligible to vote after reaching the voting age.<sup>35</sup> The AOM non-identity political party was taken by the Democratic Party lead by Dumitru Diacov and Marian Lupu in the 2010 election. The Democratic Party is mostly supported by the former electorate of the pro-Moldovan identity parties.

## **5.2 Education System**

In May 1990, the Popular Front with the support of the Moldovans from the CP managed to form the government. Mircea Druc was named Prime Minister and most of the ministers were members of the Popular Front. The ministers were born in late 1930s and 1940s and experienced Romanian education (the case of Ion Ungureanu, the Minister of Culture) or were deported with their parents to Siberia (the case of Ion Costas, the Interior Minister). For the first time in Soviet Moldova the members of the government were only Moldovans from the right bank.

Mircea Druc was involved in the 1969 National Patriotic Front planning the

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.e-democracy.md/en/elections/parliamentary/2010/results/> 03.11.2013



unification of Moldova with Romania. In 1972 when the members of the National Patriotic Front were arrested he was expelled from the Chisinau Polytechnic Institute where he taught. In early 1980s, Druc was in Chernovtsy taking part in the Mihai Eminescu Society and in 1992 he ran for Romanian presidency on a nationalistic platform (Brezeianu and Spânu 2010: 125-126). As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the Chisinau Polytechnic Institute was established in 1964 and its first rector Sergiu Radautan promoted Moldovans for faculty and student positions instead of Russians or Ukrainians. One of the professors of the Institute was Gheorghe Ghimpu who was sentenced to six years in prison in 1972 for his contribution to the National Patriotic Front. Druc was forced to resign from the Prime Minister position in May 1991, but during his short mandate he managed to lustrate the cultural institutions and the educational system of non-Moldovans and increased cultural connections with Romania (King 2000: 151).

In 1990, Nicolae Costin, born in 1935, member of the Popular Front and one of the co-authors of the Declaration of Independence became mayor of Chisinau. Supported by the Prime Minister and Ministers of Culture and Education, Costin changed street, school and other institutions names from Soviet to Romanian names. He also incorporated in Chisinau the surrounding villages to change the demographic balance of the city.<sup>36</sup>

Nicolae Matcas was one of the longest lasting Ministers of the Popular Front. Matcas was a linguist, member of the Popular Front movement and Minister of Education from May 1990 until April 1994. Inspired by the Romanian model, in four years he managed to transform the educational system of Moldova. During his

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<sup>36</sup> Author's interview with Ana Raileanu, Adviser of the Vice-Mayor of Chisinau

mandate the Soviet 1 to 5 grading system was replaced with a 1 to 10 system; primary, secondary and high schools were reformed; the import of Romanian textbooks was encouraged; Russian language was made an optional class in the schools where Russian was not the primary language of instruction; and the Romanian diplomas became recognized in Moldova, which encouraged the young generation to study abroad. He managed to institutionalize the study of Romanian language and literature instead of Moldovan language and literature and History of Romanians instead of History of Moldova (Cudlenco 2010).

The course “History of Romanians” was taught from 1991 to 2006 when it was replaced by the communist government with “Integrated History.” The course was then reintroduced in 2012 by Mihai Sleahitchi, member of the Liberal Democrat Party. “History of Romanians” covered the history of all the territories inhabited by Romanians, while “Integrated History” focused on the history of the territory of Moldova. The communists argued that the textbook “Integrated History” followed the EU recommendations and managed to reintroduce a textbook influenced by the Soviet style of writing history when the interwar Moldova was presented as “a territory exploited by the bourgeoisie Romania” (Mironescu 2005).

The name of the course “Romanian language and literature” was never publicly proposed for change, not even during the Communist government.<sup>37</sup> But the first Communist government after 1990 (2001 – 2005) had a proposal to make Russian language mandatory for all students regardless of their first instruction language. The Russophile minorities voted overwhelmingly with the Communist Party and the decision to reintroduce Russian language was made to meet the

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<sup>37</sup> Author’s interview with Oazu Nantoi, Political analyst at the Institute for Public Policies, Chisinau..

expectations of Russians and Ukrainians.

Another decision in creating new generations with Romanian identity was the reduction of the number of students who had Russian as the instruction language. Moldovan language was for the first time after the WWII institutionalized in Moldova alongside Russian. Both languages were supported and promoted by the same institutions and leaders. Just like Transnistrian linguists argued that Moldovan is a Slavic language and therefore closer to Russian than to Romanian, political parties which promote Moldovan identity promote also Russian language. According to the 2004 census 2.47 percent of those who declared themselves Moldovans said that their first language was Russian, while only 0.78 percent of those who self-declared Romanians said that their first language is Russian.<sup>38</sup> There are three times more chances for someone who is educated in Russian to be pro-Moldovan identity than pro-Romanian.

In 1989, there were 424,000 students, enrolled in elementary and secondary schools that had Moldovan as their instruction language which represented roughly 60 percent of the entire number of students and 290,000 students studying in Russian representing 40 percent (Chinn and Kaiser 1996: 169; Olteanu 2000: 23). In 2011, there were 301,522 (79.3 percent) students using Romanian as their first language of instruction and 77,913 (20.5 percent) students having Russian as language of instruction.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=en&id=2234&idc=295> 03.17.2013

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.statistica.md/public/files/publicatii\\_electronice/Educatia/Educatia\\_RM\\_2012.pdf](http://www.statistica.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/Educatia/Educatia_RM_2012.pdf) p. 52.

### **5.3 Street pressure**

Between 1990 and 1994 the institutional framework of modern Moldova was established by the main political force, the Popular Front. State symbols, the education system and the framework of cultural institutions were the results of the Popular Front reforms. Most of the governments that followed the Valeriu Muravschi government (May 1991 – July 1992) were disengaged from creating a national identity. Only the Communist Party which ran on a successful ethnic platform in the 2001 parliamentary elections, promoted Moldovan and Russian identities. The interference by the Communist government in the shift of identity in the education system, cultural institutions and state symbols was challenged by street protests from pro-Romanian identity sympathizers even though the Popular Front had long since lost the direct control of the political life. The main participants in the street protests were young adults, college and high school students.

Starting with 1989, high school and college students became active in challenging the Moldovan authorities. After independence, Russian language and the reintegration of the country after the Transnistrian war remained sensitive issues for the young urban generation of Moldova. Throughout the 1990s but especially in the 2000s the students organized massive street protests showing opposition to government decisions to change “History of Romanians” textbook and to make Russian language mandatory in all Moldovan schools.

In the spring of 1995, the Agrarian government, formed after the 1994 elections, announced the intention of replacing the textbook “History of Romanians” with “History of Moldova,” which led to street protest. Around 60,000 college and high school students protested against the government’s initiative. After several

months, the government decided not to change the curriculum and therefore not to replace the history textbook (Open Media Research Institute: 171). A similar scenario repeated seven years later.

During the 2001 electoral campaign, the Communist Party promised that it would make Russian “the second state language of the Republic of Moldova.”<sup>40</sup> After those elections, the Minister of Education, Ilie Vancea, advocated for compulsory Russian starting on January 1, 2002. Reaction by the educational institutions was prompt and “134 school principals sent a letter to the Ministry of Education protesting the compulsory study of the Russian language” (Roper 2005: 506). In January 2002, the Minister announced that the history textbook would be replaced. For more than three months, around 3,000 people organized by the CDPP protested against the communists’ initiatives.<sup>41</sup> The protesters settled in tents and declared the area they occupied “freedom’s town.” The protests led to the resignation of the Minister of Education and forced the Communist Party to step back and postpone the Russian language initiatives. Vancea was replaced with Gheorghe Sima, member of the opposition party “Labor Union.” Sima was also replaced just four months later with Valentin Beniuc, who was a member of the Communist Party. Beniuc managed to replace the textbook “History of Romanians” with “Integrated History.”

The curriculum has not been changed substantially also due to the frequency with which Ministers of Education were replaced and because of their professional background. Since 1990, Moldova had 13 Ministers of Education: 5 were members of the pro-Moldovan identity parties, 3 were members of the pro-Romanian identity

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<sup>40</sup> <http://www.e-democracy.md/elections/parliamentary/2001/opponents/pcrm/program/>

<sup>41</sup> BBC, *Forced Russian lessons spark Moldova protest*, January 9th, 2002 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1751223.stm> 03.11.2013.

parties, and 5 were apolitical. The apolitical Ministers are a sign that the political parties were not interested in making deep reforms in the education system. They were professors or diplomats and did not have the party pressure or support to initiate radical changes of the curriculum. The pro-Moldovan identity Ministers were in office 82 months, while the pro-Romanian identity Ministers 81 months. The average time in office for the first group was 16.4 months, while the second group had 27 months per Minister. The lack of continuity of the pro-Moldovan identity Ministers meant less efficiency in the attempts to change school curriculum.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Table 6

Table 6: Ministers of Education: political affiliation and the time in office				
Prime Minister (PM)	# of months of the PM	Minister of Education (MofE)	# of months of the MofE	Political affiliation of the MofE
Mircea Druc 05/25/1990-05/28/1991	12	Nicolae Matcas 05.25.1990-04.05.1994	46	Popular Front
Valeriu Muravschi 05/28/1991-07/01/1992	13			
Andrei Sangheli (I) 07/01/1992-04/05/1994	21			
Andrei Sangheli (II) 04.05.1994-01.24.1997	34	Petru Gaugas 04.05.1994-01.24.1997	34	Apolitical (Professor)
Ion Ciubuc (I) 01.24.1997-05.22.1998	16	Iacob Popovici 01.24.1997-05.22.1998	16	Apolitical
Ion Ciubuc (II) 05.22.1998-02.17.1999	9	Anatol Grimalschi 05.22.1998-11.12.1999	18	Apolitical
Ion Sturza 02.19.1999-11.12.1999	9			
Dumitru Braghis 12.21.1999-04.19.2001	16	Ion Gutu 12.21.1999-11.22.2000	11	Communist Party
		Ilie Vancea 11.22.2000-04.19.2001	5	Communist Party
Vasile Tarlev (I) 04.19.2001-04.19.2005	48	Ilie Vancea 04.19.2001-02.26.2002	10	Communist Party
		Gheorghe Sima 02.26.2002-07.02.2003	16	Labor Union
		Valentin Beniuc 08.05.2003-04.19.2005	21	Communist Party
Vasile Tarlev (II) 04.19.2005-03.31.2008	35	Victor Tvircun 04.19.2005-03.31.2008	35	Apolitical (Diplomat)
Zinaida Greceanii (I) 03.31.2008-06.10.2009	14	Larisa Savga 03.31.2008-09.24.2009	18	Communist Party
Zinaida Greceanii (II) 06.10.2009-09.24.2009	4			
Vlad Filat (I) 09.24.2009-12.27.2010	15	Leonid Bujor 09.24.2009-12.27.2010	15	Alliance Our Moldova
Vlad Filat (II) 01.14.2011--→	27	Mihai Sleahitichi 01.14.2011-07.24.2012	18	Democrat Liberal Party
		Maia Sandu 07.24.2012--→	9	Apolitical
Source: Author				

The Moldovans who were pro-Romanian identity successfully blocked any major changes to the education system for most of the post-independence period. They managed to reshape the education system to create more Romanian identity than Moldovan identity through sporadic institutional control backed by street protests. The Moldovan Institute for Public Policies conducted a Barometer of Public Opinion in November 2012. One of the questions referred to the name of the state language. The overall responses showed that 65 percent favored calling it Moldovan, while 22.7 percent chose Romanian. But the tendencies in self-identification by age structure show a sizeable increase in choice of Romanian language among the young generation compared with older ones. In age group 18 – 29, 33.3 percent responded for Romanian, while only 21.3 percent made that choice in the next oldest group, 30 to 44.<sup>43</sup>

<b>Table 7: Distribution of responses of the question “Which name for the official language should the Constitution stipulate, in your opinion?”</b>						
Age	Moldovan	Romanian	Moldovan (Romanian)	No mention	NA	Age group as % of 18+
18 to 29	52.3%	33.3%	10.4%	2.3%	1.6%	17.37%
30 to 44	66.0%	21.3%	7.3%	2.7%	2.8%	21.82%
45 to 59	69.6%	18.4%	7.0%	1.3%	3.6%	28.45%
60 +	73.1%	17.3%	5.3%	1.5%	2.9%	32.36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65.0%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Source: <a href="http://ipp.md/libview.php?l=en&amp;idc=156&amp;id=624">http://ipp.md/libview.php?l=en&amp;idc=156&amp;id=624</a>						

<sup>43</sup> <http://ipp.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=156&id=624> p. 58



## 6. Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that national identity in Moldova is under a process of shifting from a Moldovan identity to a Romanian one. As Laitin has argued that “a person who is  $x$  today will surely be  $x$  tomorrow” (Laitin 1998: 14), I also think that personal identities do not change. But I think that the identity of a country changes throughout time. The interwar generation was educated by the Romanian government and received a Romanian identity. In spite of the fact that most of the identity creators, such as teachers, writers and political elites fled to Romania after the Second World War, the children educated prior the war were self-aware of their Romanian identity.

A process of identity shift started in Moldova in 1949 when Moldovan teachers were replaced with Russians and Transnistrians. Romanian language was renamed Moldovan, Latin script was replaced with Cyrillic, and a process of Sovietization based on Russian language was initiated. The Moldovans educated in interwar Romania self-suppressed their pro-Romanian identity under the fear of deportation. Others did not self-identify in terms of national identity, thinking that they were communists.

Transnistrians played an important role in the shift of identity of Moldova. They controlled political institutions and economic life. The right bank Moldovans managed to be promoted to leading positions of the cultural institutions, such as the Writers' Union. During the Soviet Union, the Moldovan education system created Soviet and Moldovan identities until the 1980s, when the process was again reversed

towards Romanian identity. Linguists, writers and liberal artists born in the 1920s to 1940s and who had at least a few years of school with teachers educated in interwar Romania were the main group that challenged the Soviet Moldovan political establishment in the last years of the Soviet Union. The 1920 – 1940 generation created the institutional framework of the independent Moldova. The identity project of that interwar generation created educational institutions that have led to new generations of Moldovans who have a pro-Romanian identity.

After the 1990 elections, the Popular Front formed the government and created the bases of the Moldovan institutions educating new generations with Romanian identity. Even though the Popular Front lost the control of the political institutions, initiatives to revise their change in the curriculum were stopped by street pressure. The participants in street protests were college and high school students.

I also have used the popularity of political parties to underline the tendencies of national identity shift in Moldova. I have not presented the political parties as institutions that create national identity, but I discussed them as an indicator of national identity trends. The number of votes received by the political parties coincides with the generational trend.

It is important to acknowledge that this paper did not cover a few significant aspects of identity construction in Moldova. I did not talk about the 1992 civil war between Moldova and Transnistria. The war lasted for less than five months and had around 1,000 casualties, and it was enough to stop the process of fast Romanization. The first consequence of the war was the retreat of the pro-Soviet identity promoters to Transnistria. The second consequence was the resignation of pro-Romanian identity political groups from government. Most of them, such as the first President, Mircea

Snegur, became more politically pragmatic and avoided openly promoting Romanian identity. Other activists returned to their cultural institutions, such as universities and research institutes.

The main promoters of Romanian identity either moved to Romania or died. Political activists such as Mircea Druc, Nicolae Matcas, Ion Ungureanu and Leonida Lari moved to Romania and continued their activities from Bucharest. Other such as Nicolae Costin, Ion and Doina Aldea-Teodorovici, Gheorghe Ghimpu and Grigore Vieru died in car accidents. Dumitru Matcovschi survived a car accident but spent several years in hospital. They were some of the most important believers in the Romanian identity. None of them was a professional politician and their role in the political life was short but deep in shifting the process of national identity building in Moldova. But most of the Moldovan political leaders did not show the same dedication to the identity cause. Iurie Rosca, the leader of CDPP; Igor Dodon, the leader of the Republic of Moldova Socialists Party; Marian Lupu, the leader of the DP; and many others supported policies that conflict their parties' position on national identity.

This paper also did not discuss the role of the international actors in the process of national identity building in Moldova. Russia, but especially Romania, provided significant input to influence the construction of identity in Moldova. Romania's role was significant in the last years of Soviet Moldova and especially in the early 1990s, providing logistical support and trained personnel. Romania has offered between 2,000 and 5,000 scholarships every year covering high school, college and graduate students. The scholarships were offered by the Romanian Ministry of Education even between 2001 and 2009, when the Communist Party was

in power. The scholarships were not offered through the Moldovan Ministry of Education but through the Romanian Embassy to Moldova. Also, starting with 2009, the Romanian citizenship law loosened and in support of these legislative changes, a separate department under the Romanian Ministry of Justice now has the bureaucratic capacity to offer around 80,000 citizenships per year. As of 2013, almost 10 percent of the population of Moldova has acquired Romanian citizenship.

Moldova represents a complex case of national identity construction. The small group of pro-Romanian identity intellectuals used the unique historical opportunities at the end of the Soviet Union to gain political power and impose their national identity project over the education system and future young generations of Moldovans. The linguists, writers and artists who supported the Romanian identity reversed the Soviet-era education system from creating generations with Moldovan identity to building new generations with Romanian identity.

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